

Christianity and World Problems: No. 3

FRANCE

AND THE PEACE OF EUROPE

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
I: WHY FRANCE IS AFRAID.....	5
II: FRENCH METHODS OF SEEKING SECURITY..	7
(1) MILITARY FORCE	
(a) DISARMAMENT OF GERMANY	
(b) MILITARY OCCUPATION	
(c) POWERFUL FRENCH ARMY	
(2) TERRITORIAL TRANSFERS	
(3) DIPLOMATIC MEASURES	
(4) ECONOMIC PROVISIONS	
(5) A HEAVY INDEMNITY	
(6) SUMMARY	
III: CONSEQUENCES OF FRENCH FEAR.....	22
(1) EFFECTS UPON MILITARISM	
(2) EFFECTS UPON THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS	
(3) EFFECTS UPON THE GERMAN PEOPLE	
(4) ECONOMIC EFFECTS UPON EUROPE	
(5) EFFECTS UPON FRENCH SECURITY	
IV: WHAT CAN THE UNITED STATES DO ABOUT IT?	30

I: WHY FRANCE IS AFRAID

France is desperately afraid. Several visits to Europe during and since the war have helped the writer to understand the ground of her fear. A recent stay of three months in Paris, Berlin and London has intensified his keen appreciation of the position of France.

Miles and miles of white crosses in military cemeteries symbolize the first reason for the fear of France. A million and a half Frenchmen died in defence of their country. Hundreds of thousands of others are crippled for life. From six thousand to eight thousand square miles of French soil were laid waste; hundreds of cities and towns were devastated; half a million houses were demolished; railways, industrial plants and mines were wrecked; 280 billion francs were expended in carrying on the war.

France is afraid that this price may have to be paid again in a decade or in a generation. She is deeply conscious of the fact that her soil has been invaded many times during the past two centuries. Impressions of the forty-four important wars in Europe during the last hundred years are still vivid in her memory. She assumes that further wars will be fought in the coming decades. She is afraid that Germany with her sixty millions will recover and again become a menace to Europe. This fear is increased by the collapse of the Franco-Russian alliance, which has deprived her of the support of a powerful ally.

Mingled with fear is hatred of Germany. Fear and hatred are always found together. Because of fear, many of the French people have learned to hate. Four years of hostilities and war-propaganda raised this hatred to new heights. There has never been any doubt in France that Germany deliberately and diabolically planned the war. German atrocities during the war not only shocked

the whole world, they provoked intense hatred in France. Throughout the war all belligerent Governments deliberately cultivated hatred of the enemy. France has no confidence whatever in German promises and does not believe that Germany has any intentions of fulfilling the Treaty of Versailles if she can possibly find a way of escape.

The writer requests his readers to keep constantly in mind that *the present discussion does not deal with the mistakes and crimes of the German leaders before or since the war*. An account of Germany's heavy share of responsibility for starting the war, German atrocities during the war, and the fatal blunders of German leaders since the war, is too long a story to record here. Many volumes have been written on these points and the essential facts are well known to the American people. This particular discussion is confined to an analysis of the French policy.

II: FRENCH METHODS OF SEEKING SECURITY

In view of her stupendous losses, deep fear and keen suspicion, it was natural that France should emerge from the war with a passion for security. *The French leaders were convinced that the only way of achieving permanent security was by crushing Germany completely*, so completely as to remove all possibility of the recovery of her military and economic power within a generation or more.

During the early days of the Peace Conference it became evident that the French leaders had planned in considerable detail how this should be accomplished. The available evidence seems to indicate conclusively that France sought to deal with Germany in five ways: (1) Military Force; (2) Territorial Transfers; (3) Diplomatic Measures; (4) Economic Provisions; (5) A Heavy Indemnity.

(1) Military Force

(a) Disarmament of Germany. This was the first plank in the French platform. In this desire she was joined by the whole world. It was natural, therefore, that the Armistice terms and the Peace Treaty should contain detailed specifications on this point. Germany's army was reduced to a mere police force of 100,000 men. Compulsory military service was abolished. The maximum amount of armaments which Germany could possess was carefully specified. All fortified works, fortresses and field works within fifty kilometres of the east bank of the Rhine were disarmed and dismantled. Provisions were being made for the distribution of the German navy among the Allies or for its destruction, when the Germans took the matter into their own hands and sent practically all their major ships to the bottom of

Scapa Flow. Thus Germany was left without a navy of any consequence. Nothing was overlooked in the effort to destroy completely her military and naval power.

How completely this was accomplished is revealed by a comparison of the German army of 100,000 with the armies of some of the smaller countries of Europe since the war:¹ Belgium, 118,000; Czecho-Slovakia, 149,000; Jugo-Slavia, 152,000; Spain, 165,000; Roumania, 180,000; Poland, 293,000.

(b) *Military Occupation of Strategic German Centers.* Not only must Germany be disarmed, but the French leaders believed also that security demanded the military occupation of parts of Germany. Article 428 of the Treaty provides for the occupation of the left bank of the Rhine, together with the bridgeheads, by Allied troops for a period of fifteen years.

The burden of this occupation has been assumed by the French. At the end of June, 1922, the French Army of Occupation numbered 150,000, including many thousands of dark-skinned African troops. Ex-Premier Nitti tells us that in March, 1920, there were 55,000 colored troops on the Rhine.² The French claim a distinction between black and colored troops, hence their insistence that there are no black troops on the Rhine.

During the Peace Conference, French leaders endeavored strenuously to secure the *permanent* military occupation of the left bank of the Rhine. They also sought the military occupation of Essen and other parts of the Ruhr. As early as February 7, 1919, a committee of the Supreme War Council, headed by M. Loucheur, a member of M. Clemenceau's Cabinet, recommended the military occupation of Essen and the principal Krupp establishments and the greater part of the Rheinisch-Westphalian coal fields.³ On June 24, 1919, in a meeting of the Council of Four, M. Clemenceau again advocated the seizing of Essen.⁴

¹ See Francesco Nitti, "The Decadence of Europe," p. 297 ff.

² *Ibid.*, p. 135.

³ Ray Stannard Baker, "Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement," Vol. I, p. 363.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 96.

(c) *Maintenance of a Powerful French Army.* In addition to the disarmament of Germany and the military occupation of German centers, the French program called for a powerful French army. President Wilson advocated the abolition of compulsory military service, not only in Germany but universally. To this the French leaders offered the most vigorous objection. They were eager to have it abolished completely in Germany, but would not consider for a moment its abolition in France.

In carrying out her policy, France has developed a very powerful army. In July, 1921, nearly three years after the war, she had an army of 810,000 men.¹ *This is a larger and more effective army than Germany had before the war.* At the end of June, 1922, the French army numbered 728,000 men. Included in this number were approximately 200,000 African troops. By the end of 1923, France expects to have 4,000 military and naval aeroplanes, with twenty-one units of airmen.² She has also greatly strengthened her navy and is steadily increasing the number of her submarines.

(2) *Territorial Transfers*

The second plank in the French platform was the weakening of Germany by territorial transfers. The first of these items was Alsace-Lorraine. At this point she received the support of practically the whole world. In addition, Germany was deprived by the Treaty of the following territory: All her colonies, parts of Silesia and Upper Silesia, the Danzig Corridor, Memel, Eupen, Malmédy, and part of Schleswig. The Saar Basin and the left bank of the Rhine were lost for *at least fifteen years*.

In addition to the actual provisions of the Treaty, French leaders earnestly contended for still further transfers of territory. They maintained that French security demanded the absolute and permanent separation from Germany of the whole left bank of the Rhine—embracing ten thousand square miles and more than five million inhabitants. They also sought the permanent annexation of the whole Saar Basin.

¹ Francesco Nitti, "The Wreck of Europe," p. 137.

² "The Decadence of Europe," p. 195.

The earliest written record of the demand of France for the separation of the Rhineland and the annexation of the Saar is found in a secret treaty negotiated between France and Russia, in February, 1917. In a letter from the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs to the French Ambassador at Petrograd, dated February 14, 1917, the Russian Government agreed to support France at the Peace Conference in the following demands:¹ "Alsace-Lorraine is to be restored to France. The frontiers are to be extended at least up to the limits of the former Principality of Lorraine, and *are to be drawn up at the discretion of the French Government* so as to provide for the strategical needs and for the inclusion in French territory of the entire iron district of Lorraine and of the *entire coal district of the Saar Valley*. The rest of the territories situated on the left bank of the Rhine, which now form part of the German Empire, are to be *entirely separated from Germany* and freed from all political and economic dependence upon her. The territories of the left bank of the Rhine outside French territory are to be constituted as autonomous and neutral States, and are to be *occupied by French troops* until such times as the enemy states have completely satisfied all the conditions and guarantees indicated in the treaty of peace."

The evidence contained in the records of the Peace Conference is overwhelming and leaves absolutely no doubt whatever that the demands of this secret treaty formed an essential part of the French program at Versailles. On March 14, 1919, Marshal Foch sent a long memorandum to President Wilson which demanded a military frontier of the Rhine.² He pleaded that Germany be deprived "of all territorial sovereignty on the left bank of the river." This demand was ably supported by M. Clemenceau. M. Tardieu, chief associate of M. Clemenceau at the Peace Conference, presented a long memorandum in which he set forth the French

¹ "Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement," Vol. I, pp. 57, 58. (Italics mine.)

² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 234.

demand for complete and permanent ownership of the coal mines and outright annexation of the Saar Basin.¹

There is further evidence that French leaders sought to separate the Rhineland from Germany. After being compelled to abandon their extreme demands at Versailles, they sought to accomplish by intrigue that which they had failed to gain by diplomacy. In a letter to President Wilson, dated May 22, 1919, General Pershing said: "This morning, General Mangin, Commanding General of the French Army at Mayence, sent a Colonel of his Staff to General Liggett's headquarters at Coblenz to inquire what our attitude would be toward a political revolution on the west bank of the Rhine for the establishment of an Independent Rhineland Republic, free from Germany. He inquired what the American attitude would be toward such a new Republic. *The Staff Officer stated that they had fifty deputies ready to send into the American sector to assist in starting the revolution.*"²

Ex-Premier Nitti has called our attention to the report of a French military commission concerning conditions in the occupied areas, dated May 25, 1922. This report points out the difficulties involved in separating the Rhineland in so short a time as fifteen years, and makes certain suggestions as to how the process may be hastened. It goes on to say: "These are doubtless ambitious plans, but they will be amply justified if carried out with wisdom and judgment, in measure *as Germany forfeits her pledges.*"³

There is an abundance of evidence that the French leaders have never ceased to encourage separatist movements. For more than four years they have given support to the *Rheinische Republic*, a propaganda newspaper of the separatists. During a recent trip to France and the occupied areas, the writer had the fact of French support of separatist movements called to his attention so frequently that there seems to him to be no doubt

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 72.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 87. (Italics mine.)

³ "The Decadence of Europe," p. xvii. (Italics mine.)

whatever at this point. Several French officials were frank enough to admit their desire to see such a movement succeed.

(3) *Diplomatic Measures*

The third plank in the French platform was the strengthening of countries that were enemies of Germany, actually or potentially. Throughout the Peace Conference, France was a strong advocate of buffer states. President Wilson himself went so far as to say that "the only real interest of France in Poland is in weakening Germany by giving Poland territory to which she has no right."¹

In a memorandum dated March 31, 1919, M. Clemenceau said: "If one is obliged, in giving to these young peoples frontiers without which they cannot live, to transfer to their sovereignty the sons of the very Germans who have enslaved them, it is to be regretted and it must be done with moderation, but it cannot be avoided."²

After carefully examining the secret minutes and other records of the Peace Conference, Mr. Ray Stannard Baker has written: "The central purpose of the policy of France—here, as always, dictated by French fears—was to build up a ring of small States around Germany and make these dependent upon her, rather than upon Germany, for protection. Poland, with the Polish Army commanded by French generals, thus became a military satellite of France; and this was almost equally true of Roumania and of others of the small States. The French supported throughout the Peace Conference—the record is full of it—the demands of these smaller States for the utmost aggrandizement at the expense of the enemy States."³ Everywhere in Europe, France is seeking to strengthen her position against Germany by a series of understandings and alliances.

¹ "Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement," Vol. II, p. 60.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 251.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 396.

(4) Economic Provisions

The fourth plank in the French platform was the crippling of Germany's economic power. When we pause for a moment to consider the terrible financial plight in which France found herself at the end of the war, we find it easy to sympathize with her fear of Germany's economic power. Thousands of square miles of her soil had been devastated, hundreds of villages and cities demolished, industrial plants and mines wrecked. She had expended enormous sums in waging the war. She had raised only a small proportion of her annual budget by taxation, and had piled up a stupendous debt. The Government was faced with the imminent prospect of bankruptcy. On the other hand, German soil had scarcely been touched and the German industrial plants were intact.

Under such circumstances, it was inevitable that France should seek to cripple Germany's economic power. Such a policy had been foreshadowed by the recommendations of the Paris Economic Conference of June, 1916. At that conference elaborate plans were made for "the war after the war." The Allied nations agreed upon a drastic commercial discrimination in each other's favor and all aimed at Germany. Professor A. A. Young, economic adviser to the American Peace Commission, has pointed out that these agreements "were revived in the French proposals at the Peace Conference. They were probably a fairly accurate expression of French policy."¹

With this as a background, it is not surprising that the economic sections of the Treaty are drastic in the extreme. In the first place, it is well to recall that the numerous transfers of German territory, including all her colonies, made a heavy drain upon her economic resources, especially in coal and iron. German losses in this regard were as follows: Area, 13 per cent; population, 10 per cent; coal production, 25 per cent (before the invasion of the Ruhr, which contains 72 per cent of the remainder); iron ore production, 75 per cent; zinc ore

¹"A History of the Peace Conference of Paris," edited by H. W. V. Temperley, Vol. 5, p. 65.

production, 68 per cent; wheat and rye production, 15 per cent; potato production, 18 per cent.

In addition to the economic loss inherent in the transfers of territory, by the terms of the Treaty Germany was compelled to give up 90 per cent of her merchant shipping. Control of her river system was taken out of her hands and placed under the control of international commissions. Out of her reduced supply of coal, she is required to deliver to France, Belgium and Italy a maximum of 42 million tons each year for five years, and a decreasing amount for five years thereafter. She was also required to hand over to the Allies 5,000 locomotives and 150,000 railway wagons.

Germany is also obliged to deliver to France 35,000 tons of benzol, 50,000 tons of coal tar, and 30,000 tons of sulphate of ammonia, each year for three years. She is also compelled to furnish France and Belgium the following quantity of live stock: 140,000 milk cows, 40,000 heifers, 120,000 sheep, 40,000 fillies and mares, 700 stallions, 4,000 bulls, 1,200 rams, 15,000 sows.

The Reparation Commission has been given power to demand the surrender of any great business property in Germany. As President Wilson pointed out in his St. Louis address: "The Reparation Commission can determine the currents of trade, the conditions of credit, of international credit; it can determine how much Germany is going to buy, where it is going to buy, and how it is going to pay for it."

An elaborate series of provisions forces Germany to concede "most favored nation" treatment to the Allies, while she receives no such reciprocal favor in return. The Allies also assumed the right to seize all property owned by German citizens in ceded territories and in Allied countries. Concerning this provision, President Wilson admitted that the Allies "had taken certain liberties with international law."

Germany is also required to pay all costs of the Armies of Occupation. This item in itself constitutes a heavy drain upon German finance. According to the official figures of the Reparation Commission, the total cost of the Armies of Occupation from the Armistice to the end

of December, 1922, was 3,992,490,942 gold marks, or approximately one billion dollars.¹ This amount by no means covers the entire cost to Germany, but only the amounts to be refunded to the Allies. Nor does it cover expenses during 1923.

It is worth pointing out, moreover, that as against this cost of 3,992,490,942 gold marks, the total amount spent by Germany on her army and navy during the four years from 1910 to 1913, when the mad race of armaments was at its height, amounted to only 5,677,000,000 gold marks.² That is to say, *the average annual cost of the Armies of Occupation has been more than two-thirds as much as the average annual cost of the entire German army and navy during the four years preceding the World War.*

There is further evidence that the French leaders have sought vigorously to weaken Germany economically. At the end of the war the German gold reserve amounted to about 800 million dollars. The American and British delegates pointed out the disastrous consequences to German finance if the gold reserve should be decreased. Nevertheless, on February 17, 1919, in the Council of Ten, we find the French representative, M. Loucheur, suggesting that the whole of this amount be demanded.³ It was the same M. Loucheur, a member of the French Cabinet, who suggested, in London in 1921, that the Allies demand 25 per cent of the capital of all German corporations.⁴

French fear was the chief factor in prolonging the blockade of Germany for six months after the Armistice, with the consequent appalling hunger and starvation and the general dislocation of German industry. In a letter to President Wilson, on February 4, 1919, Mr. Herbert Hoover said: "The French, by obstruction of every financial measure that we can propose to the feeding of Germany, in the attempt to compel us to loan money

¹ Reparation Commission, "Costs of the Armies of Occupation," Dec. 31, 1922.

² See Kirby Page, "War: Its Causes, Consequences and Cure," p. 12 (paper edition).

³ "Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement," Vol. II, p. 396.

⁴ "The Decadence of Europe," p. xiv.

to Germany for this purpose, have defeated every step so far for getting them the food which we have been promising for three months.”¹

The French attitude toward supplying Germany with raw materials is indicated by the remark of M. Klotz, French Minister of Finance, in the Council of Ten, on February 10th: “The Allies had never agreed to supply raw materials to Germany. The devastated countries would never agree to raw materials being supplied to Germany, where the factories were still intact, until their own industries had been re-established.”²

The French leaders were also insistent in their demand that Germany should be excluded from foreign markets—in addition to being deprived of all colonies and 90 per cent of her merchant shipping. On March 31, 1919, M. Clemenceau wrote: “The exclusion of Germany from foreign markets would be total and would last for some time.”³

Professor A. A. Young, economic adviser to the American Peace Commission, has commented on the French economic policy as follows: “Their more important proposals, taken as a whole, seemed to embody the extreme and suicidal policy I have just described. Especially when they were coupled with the other French proposals, it was easy to read into them a purpose to destroy the foundations of the economic life of the Central Powers, and of Germany in particular. Militarism and economic policy seemed to have joined hands.”⁴

(5) *A Heavy Indemnity*

The fifth plank in the French platform was the imposing of a heavy indemnity. One of the great struggles of the Peace Conference centered about this point. The whole world agreed that Germany should be obliged to restore the devastated areas of France and Belgium, in so far as this was possible. Upon this question the delegates at the Peace Conference were in entire accord.

¹ “Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement,” Vol. III, p. 328.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 17.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 251.

⁴ “What Really Happened at Paris,” edited by E. M. House, p. 299.

Rathenau and other German leaders freely admitted the justice of this demand. The struggle came over the question as to whether Germany should be made to pay the entire cost of the war, or a huge indemnity in excess of the cost of restoring the devastated areas.

The actual decision of the Peace Conference in this regard is well known. The principle was adopted of including pensions and other war costs, in addition to actual restoration. The total amount of reparation, or indemnity, was not agreed upon, but was referred to the Reparation Commission, with instructions to notify the German Government of their assessment on or before May 1, 1921. This Commission assessed the claims of the Allies against Germany at 138 billion gold marks, of which 6 billions were for the Belgian debt. Of this total amount, according to the estimate of Mr. J. M. Keynes, representative of the British Treasury at the Peace Conference, *about one-third is to cover the cost of restoring the devastated areas, and two-thirds to cover pensions and other war costs.*¹

As enormous as is this total sum, it does not begin to approach the maximum demands made by the French and British leaders at Versailles. During his General Election campaign of 1918, Mr. Lloyd George had talked in terms of a war indemnity of 120 billion dollars. At the Peace Conference, M. Loucheur, a French Cabinet member, accepted these figures and suggested that it be raised to 200 billion dollars—800 billion gold marks, instead of a mere 138 billions.² In this connection, it should be remembered that, according to the estimate of Sir George Paish, the total pre-war wealth of Ger-

¹ Concerning the inclusion of pensions in the total amount due for reparations, Mr. Thomas William Lamont, Economic Adviser to the American Peace Commission, says: "I well remember the day upon which President Wilson determined to support the inclusion of pensions in the reparation bill. Some of us were gathered in his library in the Place des États Unis, having been summoned by him to discuss this particular question of pensions. We explained to him that *we couldn't find a single lawyer in the American delegation that would give an opinion in favor of including pensions.* All the logic was against it. 'Logic! Logic!' exclaimed the President, 'I don't give a damn for logic. I am going to include pensions!'"—"What Really Happened at Paris," p. 272, italics mine.

² "Woodrow Wilson and World Settlement," Vol. II, p. 372.

many was only 80 billion dollars, or 320 billion gold marks, while her post-war wealth has probably been reduced to half this amount.

(6) *Summary*

We have seen that on three main points—separation of the left bank of the Rhine from Germany, permanent annexation to France of the Saar Basin, and an indemnity covering war costs—the French leaders were compelled to abandon their extreme demands. Concerning the struggle over these points, M. Tardieu has written: “Calm and unruffled on most points, bitter and stormy on three of the most important to France; the left bank of the Rhine, the Saar Valley, and the question of reparations. These three points took up long sittings and led to fierce debates.”

Dr. Isaiah Bowman, Chief Territorial Adviser to the American Peace Commission, tells of being summoned, with two of his associates, by President Wilson during the crisis of the Peace Conference, at which time the President said: “Gentlemen, I am in trouble and I have sent for you to help me out. The matter is this: the French want the whole left bank of the Rhine. I told M. Clemenceau that I could not consent to such a solution of the problem. He became very much excited and then demanded ownership of the Saar Basin. I told him I could not agree to that either because it would mean giving 300,000 Germans to France. I do not know whether I shall see M. Clemenceau again. I do not know whether he will return to the meeting this afternoon. In fact, I do not know whether the Peace Conference will continue. M. Clemenceau called me a pro-German and abruptly left the room.”¹

So insistent were the French leaders in their extreme demands that President Wilson threatened to withdraw from the Peace Conference—he went so far as to cable for the *George Washington*. This action caused them to abandon their demands at least temporarily. There were probably three main reasons why they did this.

¹ “What Really Happened at Paris,” edited by E. M. House, pp. 464, 465.

First, they desired to preserve the Entente at any cost, not daring to act alone at that time. Second, they had already secured provisions which placed Germany absolutely at their mercy for fifteen years, and probably for thirty years. Third, they believed that their extreme demands could be gained by waiting.

On this latter point M. Tardieu and M. Clemenceau have made significant admissions. In his book, "The Truth About the Treaty," M. Tardieu has written: "Evacuation is to be by zones, every five years, but only on condition that Germany faithfully complies with the Peace Treaty. . . . We modified them (our terms) on certain points. . . . *But we did not consent to give up occupation any more than the right to prolong it.*"¹ In his Introduction to M. Tardieu's book, M. Clemenceau has written: "This Treaty, like all treaties, is and can only be a *prolongation of war activities* until complete fulfillment."

Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson, a distinguished English writer, has called our attention to the fact that during the crisis of the Peace Conference, M. Clemenceau, one day while under fire from General Foch and M. Jules Cambon for yielding to President Wilson, turned to President Poincare, with these highly significant words: "Mr. President, you are much younger than I. In fifteen years the Germans will not have executed all the clauses of the treaty, and in fifteen years, if you do me the honour to come to my tomb, you will be able to say to me, I am convinced of it, '*We are on the Rhine and we shall stay there.*'"²

In the light of these words and in view of the consistency with which the French leaders have followed their policy of crushing Germany's economic power, the invasion of the Ruhr by French and Belgian troops in January, 1923, assumes new significance. It will be recalled that even during the Peace Conference the French leaders suggested the military occupation of Essen, the most important city of the Ruhr. Four years later,

¹ P. 201.

² Quoted by G. Lowes Dickinson, "War: Its Nature, Cause and Cure," p. 94.

America having withdrawn and Great Britain being powerless to prevent it, France seized the Ruhr.

In Europe, outside of France, and in certain circles within France, it is almost universally believed that the French are not in the Ruhr primarily for reparations. The fact is unmistakable that they have received far less reparations since the Ruhr invasion than before. Every week France stays in the Ruhr weakens Germany's economic power and reduces her capacity to pay reparations. The French leaders know this and privately admit that the invasion of the Ruhr is not a paying proposition financially. In spite of this they continue to occupy the Ruhr and all evidence supports the contention that they are there to stay. Why? Because they have always maintained that *security is far more important than reparations*. French leaders still assert that the security of France demands the crushing of Germany's economic power. The Ruhr is the very economic heart of Germany. In it are concentrated the great basic industries of Europe. Without the Ruhr, Germany simply cannot exist as a great industrial nation. And so the French have sought for four years to occupy that strategic center. And now they are there. In an address on September 16, 1923, President Poincare spoke very plainly: "We hold pledges and we shall keep them until we have received satisfaction. . . . We know well that Germany, not having executed any one of the clauses of the Treaty, successive Governments in France since 1919 have declared that the periods of occupation of the left bank *have not yet commenced to run*."

An abundance of evidence as to France's intentions in the Ruhr is contained in a secret report to the French Government by M. Dariac, President of the Finance Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, which was later published by the Manchester Guardian under the title "The Dariac Report." The following significant sentences are taken from this report: "The whole of French policy in the Rhineland is at all times subordinate to one primary condition, the prolonged maintenance of our army of the Rhine in the occupied territories. . . . A well-considered diplomacy must apply one after another

the successive links of a well-thought-out course of action which, little by little, will detach from Germany a free Rhineland under the military guard of France and Belgium." The Manchester Guardian says in this connection: "As regards the Saar no less than as regards the Rhineland and the Ruhr, everything in this report points to an indefinite and virtually permanent occupation of both districts."

It would be untrue, of course, to say that France alone has sought to crush Germany. At some points the British program was even more severe than that of France. While on some points the Italian and American delegates opposed the French policy, on many others they gave enthusiastic support. It is obvious that so many of the French demands would never have been incorporated into the Treaty without the support of her allies. Because her danger was greater and her fear more intense, France has been more vigorous and untiring in her efforts to crush Germany. With the passionate desire of France for security, all of us deeply sympathize.

It should be pointed out however, that desire for security has not been the only motive behind French policy. No individual is motivated by a single desire. Much more is this true of nations. There has been an element of greed in French policy, as in that of every other nation. Nationalism and imperialism have not been absent. French fear has given the forces of greed and imperialism a chance which they have not been slow to accept. The writer is convinced, however, that fear has been and is today the corner-stone of French policy. He has no desire to bring an indictment against France. His only concern is to get at the facts as to how the French leaders are actually seeking permanent security, and to inquire as to the effectiveness of the measures which they have adopted. Our next step, therefore, is to discover the actual results achieved by the French policy.

III: CONSEQUENCES OF FRENCH FEAR

(1) Effects Upon Militarism

For many decades prior to the World War, militarism was the supreme menace to the peoples of Europe. One of the great objectives of the war was to destroy militarism and end war forever. What has been the effect of French fear upon militarism? The answer is found in the present state of affairs in Europe. So great has been the fear of France that she has lost all confidence in other means of protection than military force. Because of this she has maintained a larger army since the war than Germany had before the war.

Moreover, she has encouraged her smaller allies to support large armies. Of even greater consequence, her policy is causing deep concern in Great Britain, and we seem to be witnessing the beginning of a new race of armaments, especially in aeroplanes. The fear of France has prevented serious discussion of a general reduction of armaments. Her policy of depending upon military force has been adopted by Mussolini. Just who will be next in imitation of France cannot be predicted. The evidence is complete that the fear of France is by far the greatest of all current obstacles to an adequate reduction in armaments, and is also the most powerful support of the philosophy of military force in the world today.

(2) Effects Upon the League of Nations

From the standpoint of ultimates, the League of Nations was probably the greatest gain of the war. There is no hope of permanent peace unless the sphere of law and orderly government is extended to include interna-

tional relations. Just as the Greek cities could not endure permanently as sovereign units; just as the thirteen free and independent States in America could not have retained all their sovereign rights and refused to form an effective Federal Union without disastrous consequences; so the nations of the earth in this generation cannot escape further wars unless they speedily erect effective international processes of justice—legislative, adjudicatory and administrative. There is simply no other alternative. The League is a step in the right direction. It has many weaknesses and severe limitations, but it is an advance over any previous effort to construct effective international processes of justice.

The fear of France and her dependence upon military force have been the chief barriers to the League's successful operation. She has consistently refused to grant adequate power to the League, and has repeatedly refused to allow the major problems of Europe to come before it for settlement. She has done much more to support the old balance of power idea than to encourage the development of a real League. Indeed, the French conception of a League advanced at the Peace Conference was one based upon military force, with an international army, a sort of glorified Supreme War Council.

The example of France in refusing to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the League was recently followed by Mussolini, who told the League in plain words to keep its hands off, that what he was doing in Corfu was none of its business. France is in the strategic position of being able to make or break the League. Thus far her fear has caused it grave injury.

(3) Effects Upon the German People

French fear and French dependence upon military force have had profound effects upon the German people. To understand how the Germans view the actions of France, it is necessary to remember that they too endured untold agonies throughout the war. The number of Germans killed in the war was far greater than the number of French dead. While Germany had only a small devastated area in East Prussia, the total volume of suf-

fering in Germany was almost certainly in excess of that in France, due to the fact that Germany was blockaded throughout the war and for six months after the Armistice. There was relatively little shortage of food in France during the war, while in Germany hundreds of thousands of men, women and children died of actual starvation or malnutrition due to lack of proper food.

Moreover, the German people, like the people in all belligerent countries, were victims of fear and war-propaganda. *The vast majority of German people thought they were fighting in self-defence.* Two visits to Germany since the war have convinced the writer that the truth of this statement is beyond question.

The series of secret treaties entered into by the Allied Governments during the early days of the war, in which provisions were made for dividing up important sections of Germany and Austria-Hungary among themselves—and there is absolutely no doubt as to the authenticity of these treaties, which later were published—were seized upon by the Germans as proof of the aggressiveness of the Allies, and served to strengthen their convictions that they were fighting in self-defence.

The Germans finally surrendered on a basis of the Fourteen Points and subsequent addresses of President Wilson. The Allied Governments solemnly agreed to make peace on this basis, with two reservations. The German people are convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Treaty of Versailles is a fundamental and wholesale violation of this promise. They believe that the Allies regarded the Armistice terms as mere scraps of paper.

They point to such provisions in the Fourteen Points and subsequent addresses of President Wilson as: “the removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace . . . a free open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims . . . we do not wish to fight her (Germany) either with arms or with hostile arrangements of trade . . . *there shall be no annexations, no contributions, no punitive damages . . . peoples and,*

provinces are not to be bartered about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were chattels and pawns in a game . . . we are ready to deal fairly with the German Power . . . evenhanded and dispassionate justice to Germany . . . the destruction of every arbitrary power anywhere . . . to the end that covenants may be sacredly observed, no private plots or conspiracies hatched, no selfish injuries wrought with impunity . . . the final triumph of justice and fair dealing"—they point to these statements which were accepted by the Allies as the basis of peace, and then point to the Treaty of Versailles.

The German people are wholly convinced that the terms of the Treaty are absolutely incapable of fulfillment. They recognize the justice of the claim that the French and Belgian devastated areas should be restored, and point out that while *Rathenau and other German leaders have repeatedly offered to restore these areas*,¹ the French leaders have always refused to accept their offers, and have insisted upon a huge indemnity, only one-third of which is for the restoration of the devastated areas. They believe that the French leaders recognize the impossibility of the terms of the Treaty being carried out. To the Germans the Treaty means the determination of France to crush them completely.

As evidence of this, they point to the words of M. Clemenceau, spoken in the French Chamber of Deputies:

¹“German efforts to reconstruct the devastated districts of France were first expressed officially at Versailles in May, 1919, and were welcomed by the Allies. In the following July negotiations were opened between the French and German Governments for reafforestation and reorganisation of coal mines: . . . Further suggestions made in November by Dr. Gessler, Minister of Reconstruction, were rejected. In July, 1920, at the Spa Conference a scheme for a great co-operative effort in French reconstruction was introduced, but gained little attention. At the Brussels Conference of experts in December, 1920, Dr. Bergmann, German Secretary of State, again expressed Germany's desire to co-operate in restoring the ruined districts, but again nothing resulted. Once more, at the London Conference in March, 1921, Dr. Simons reiterated this desire, but still there was no response. In April, 1921, a very great effort was made to participate in restoration work. The German Trade Unions wished to co-operate in erecting brick and tile plants, lime kilns and cement works, and to deliver and put together at least 25,000 wooden houses. This great plan practically came to nothing, all that resulted being the delivery of 101 specimen houses.”—British Bureau of Ruhr Information, Bulletin No. 6, October 9, 1923.

"I conceive of life after the war as a continual conflict, whether there be war or peace. I believe it was Bernhardt who said that politics are war conducted with other weapons. We can invert this aphorism, and say that *peace is war conducted with other weapons.*"

They believe that the French leaders have never abandoned their extreme demands, and point to subsequent occupations of Dusseldorf and Duisburg in 1921, and the Ruhr in 1923, as proof. They say that if the occupation of the Ruhr is legal, the same line of reasoning will also justify the occupation of Berlin at the discretion of France. They feel sure that they have not yet seen the limits of French occupation of their territory. They do not believe that the French leaders will be satisfied until Germany is completely crushed and dismembered.

French fear and French determination to destroy Germany's power to menace Europe, have had fatal effects upon the German people. It has wholly convinced them that they were fighting in self-defence, and has caused them to regard themselves as martyrs to the vindictiveness of France. This may seem preposterous to others, but the evidence leaves no room for doubt that this is the way vast multitudes of German people actually feel.

When people regard themselves as martyrs, there is little likelihood that at the same time they will have a sense of genuine penitence. The hope of the world at the end of the war rested in the creation of a sense of penitence on the part of the German people. French fear has almost completely destroyed this hope.

(4) *Economic Effects Upon Europe*

We have already summarized the economic effects of the Treaty upon Germany. It should be remembered, moreover, that *the German people have already paid in full for German war expenses.* The net cost of the war to Germany, according to Professor Bogart's estimate, was 37 billion dollars, as compared with a total of 35 billions for Great Britain and 24 billions for France. This huge sum came out of the pockets of the German people in taxation and the purchase of bonds. The collapse of the mark has made these bonds worthless.

Therefore, the debt of the German Government has been wiped out. But at what a cost! While England is groaning under the prospect of having to pay the United States five billions in sixty years, and France states that she is unable even to consider paying interest on her loan of four billions from the United States, the German people have paid 37 billion dollars for war costs and have absolutely nothing to show for it. So far as they are concerned it is gone forever. The present generation has already paid in full the total cost of the war to Germany.

Yet she is expected to pay a huge indemnity. The result has been that German finance and industry have steadily declined. The French occupation of the Ruhr, with the consequent dislocation of industry in this most important center of Germany, precipitated the collapse of the mark. When the French entered Essen on January 11, 1923, the mark was quoted at 10,000 for a dollar. Now it has dropped to 420 billions for a dollar, that is to say, it is now practically worthless. This has resulted in indescribable suffering and misery for millions of Germans, and is rapidly bringing German industry to a standstill. Everybody with whom we talked during a recent visit agreed that there is certain to be violence, revolution, and chaos in Germany before the winter is over.

The collapse of German industry is having a terrific effect throughout the whole continent. Mr. Herbert Hoover has pointed out that there are 100 million more people in Europe than can be supported except by a highly efficient industrial organization. Europe is now an economic unit. Before the war Germany was the most important cog in this industrial machine. Upon the prosperity of Germany depended the prosperity of vast multitudes in other countries. This is still true. *There is no possibility whatever of Europe's economic recovery so long as German finance and industry are in a state of chaos.* French fear is, therefore, having disastrous effects upon the economic life of Europe, indeed upon the economic life of America and the whole world.

Concerning the economic consequences of the Treaty,

Mr. Frank Vanderlip, a well-known American banker, says: "The Treaties were dictated in a spirit of reprisal, revenge and selfishness, and in economic blindness. The evils that flow from those unhappy facts are injuring Europe more seriously than did the war itself."

(5) Effects Upon French Security

In many ways the most tragic of all the consequences of French fear is found at this point. French fear has destroyed the foundations of French security. It has resulted in a blind trust in military power and has destroyed confidence in other means of protection. It has, therefore, perpetuated militarism and hindered all efforts to establish effective international processes of justice. It has enormously intensified the bitterness and hatred on the part of millions of Germans, and has thereby increased the possibilities of a war of revenge in another generation.

The following words spoken by Mr. Lloyd George during the Peace Conference contain sound advice to France: "You may strip Germany of her colonies, reduce her armaments to a mere police force and her navy to that of a fifth-rate power; all the same in the end if she feels that she has been unjustly treated in the Peace of 1919 she will find means of exacting retribution from her conquerors."

Judged by temporary visible results, the well-rounded policy of France seems to be succeeding. Germany is completely at her mercy. No nation since the days of Napoleon has been so dominant on the continent of Europe. Moreover, she is now in a more prosperous condition than almost any other nation of Europe. All seems to be going well with France. And so it seemed to Emperor Napoleon and to Kaiser William.

Sooner or later French military domination of Europe is sure to be challenged by a combination of other powers. The lesson of history at this point is clear and unmistakable. There is no security in military power. It always brings its own nemesis. Again and again single nations have dominated continents for a time—but only for a time. France thinks she is achieving security. But

France is blind. Security cannot be achieved by converting Europe into a perpetual barracks. Permanent security can only rest upon law and international processes of justice.

The more France depends upon military power and the more vigorously she seeks to crush her enemies, the more unstable becomes her own security, and the more certain becomes her ultimate downfall. There is profound truth in the words of the Great Teacher: "They that take the sword shall perish by the sword."

IV: WHAT CAN THE UNITED STATES DO ABOUT IT?

(1) We can help France to achieve permanent security by aiding in the creation of effective international processes of justice. There is no permanent safety in huge armies and navies nor in military alliances with other nations. We do not need any further proof of the futility of national armaments and the balance of power system to maintain peace. We now know that individuals and groups can gain justice and safety only by substituting law and orderly government for violence. It is high time that we should also recognize that this is equally true of nations. International law and international processes of justice are absolutely essential if nations are to achieve justice and security. Long experience has demonstrated that three phases of orderly government are essential: legislation, adjudication and administration. If France and the other nations of Europe are to be made secure there must be a codification of existing international law, the enactment of new laws, the creation of effective international courts, and the setting in motion of adequate processes of administration of international understandings and agreements, and the willingness to abide by the common decisions of the nations.

As the richest, most powerful and most secure of all the nations, very heavy responsibility rests upon the United States to support every effort to substitute orderly government between nations for the present international anarchy and chaos.

(2) We can aid France and the rest of Europe by taking the lead in calling a world conference on economic problems. At the time of writing, M. Poincare is insisting upon restrictions that would prevent effective action

by an international economic conference. If the United States should take a positive and vigorous stand on this question, we probably could gain sufficient support from other nations to make it unlikely that France would be willing to play a lone hand. It should be fully recognized, however, that there is no permanent solution of the reparation question apart from a scaling down or wiping out of inter-allied debts. There is no escape from further economic chaos except by mutual forbearance between the nations. Of all the great powers the United States is best able to lead the way.

(3) We can aid France by taking the lead in the movement for a drastic reduction in national armaments. The precedent of the Washington Conference, together with our unsurpassed geographic location, set us apart as the logical nation to take the initiative in this regard. Our superior economic position is also a factor of great importance. Public opinion should insist that our government take prompt and vigorous action in cooperating with other nations in calling a halt to the mad race of armaments and in the movement for the outlawry of war.

The evidence seems to indicate clearly that France cannot gain security by the means which she has adopted and in which her faith now rests. On the contrary, she is undermining her own safety by perpetuating militarism and the vicious balance of power system. The United States is the only nation sufficiently disinterested and powerful to help France abandon the fatal policy which she is now following. The peace of Europe is now in the hands of France. Her own security and that of the rest of Europe depends upon the creating and strengthening of international processes of justice. The support of the United States is absolutely essential if orderly government between nations is to be established in time to prevent the further decay of western civilization. In the face of such a responsibility and confronted with such a challenge, can there be any doubt as to what course the United States should follow?

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